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SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA (DMCFARLAND)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2028

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: SWEDEN AND CUBA: TITLE III COUNTRY REVIEW OF THE  
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 52541

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Silverman  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

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1. (C) The protection and promotion of human rights is a central tenet of Swedish foreign policy. Sweden adheres to the EU's "constructive engagement" policy toward Cuba and employs such engagement to raise human rights concerns with Havana. In a March 2008 press release, Minister for Development Gunilla Carlson stated that "human rights are indivisible and universal," adding that Sweden pursues a "coherent policy for freedom and against oppression." In 2006, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) allocated nearly \$1 million (SEK 6.759 million in 2006 krona) to projects focusing on human rights training, economic modernization, and exchanges between Cuban and Swedish institutions to stimulate contact with the outside world and to encourage reforms designed to precipitate development. SIDA has not released its 2007 aid figures for Cuba.

2. (U) Sweden's 2007 MFA Human Rights Report called Cuba an "authoritarian one-party state whose inhabitants do not enjoy freedom of expression, freedom of association or an independent judicial system." Swedish leaders continue to cite Cuba as a nation of particular concern in public statements. In a February 2008 speech, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt called the succession of Raul Castro a "recycled" Castro regime, adding that this is how "aging dictatorships function." Bildt also commented: "Cuba is the only country in the western hemisphere that does not have a democratically elected government. Instead the country is burdened by an outdated and fossilized communist regime."

#### OFFICIAL VISITS

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3. (U) Although Sweden and Cuba maintain full diplomatic relations, there have been no high-level diplomatic visits in the past six months.

#### SWEDISH BUSINESS IN CUBA

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4. (U) Sweden does not make information on Swedish direct foreign investment in Cuba available to the public. Swedish companies operating in Cuba include Ericsson, Atlas Copco, Volvo Construction Equipment, Elof Hansson, and Bycosin. Swedish exports to Cuba totaled nearly \$43 million in 2007.

#### BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

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5. (U) Sweden and Cuba have a bilateral agreement regarding consolidated debt from 1987, but no specific agreements on trade.

#### EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

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¶6. (U) Although SIDA finances Linnaeus-Palme Field Studies scholarships to facilitate student exchanges, no exchanges appear to be occurring at present. Swedish doctors do not participate in Cuban-paid medical travel.

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